Hamilton Field, Warehouse Type D
(Facility Nos. 346, 400)
East of Nave Drive
Novato
Marin County
California

HABS No. CA-2398-AN

HABS
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21-NOVA,
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PHOTOGRAPHS

WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

Historic American Buildings Survey
National Park Service
Department of the Interior
San Francisco, California

HABS
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21-NOVA,
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HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY

HAMILTON FIELD
Warehouse Type D
(Facility Nos. 346, 400)

HABS No. CA-2398-AN

Location: Hamilton Army Air Field
Novato, Marin County, California
Warehouse Type D
Ordnance Warehouse (Facility No. 346) (near the northwest end of Hangar Avenue); Quartermaster's Warehouse (Facility No. 400) (east corner of 2nd Street and Escolta Avenue)

U.S.G.S.: Novato, CA. Quadrangle (7.5' series), 1954 (revised 1980)
Petaluma Point, CA. Quadrengle (7.5' series), 1959 (revised 1980)
UTM Coordinates: Zone 10; A: 542100/4213620; B: 544720/4212220; C: 542760/4210650; D: 541040/4212600

Present Owner: General Services Administration, Washington, D.C.

Present Occupant: Vacant

Present Use: Vacant

Statement of Significance:

The buildings are significant as examples of the application of an important architectural trend (Spanish Colonial Revival) adapted to reflect California's mission heritage in a dramatic departure from traditional military architecture. Facility No. 346 was used by the Air Corps as a shop during World War II and originally was an ordnance warehouse. Facility No. 400 was intended as the quartermaster's warehouse and served as a Post Exchange Warehouse during World War II. In the late 1960s it was converted to a commercial transportation facility.

See narrative for Hamilton Field (HABS No. CA-2398) for a comprehensive Statement of Significance and individual report HABS No. CA-2398-F for a condensed general Statement of Significance.

PART I: HISTORICAL INFORMATION

A. Physical History:

1. Date of Erection: Construction on the quartermaster's warehouse was completed on June 15, 1934. The ordnance warehouse was completed on August 14, 1934 (Hamilton Facility Cards 1933-1971).

2. Architect: Hamilton Field was designed under the guidance of Captain Howard B. Nurse, Construction Quartermaster. He was assisted by a corps of civilians headed by H. P. Spencer, Chief Architect, and F. W. Salfinger, Chief Engineer. Captain F. C. Petes and Lieutenant J. H. Veal of the Quartermaster's Corps were detailed to Marin County by the War Department to assist Nurse (*Novato Advance* May 28, 1932). Landscaping efforts were directed by C. C. Stevens, a local landscape engineer, using plantings chosen by Nurse and donated by Marin County citizens.

3. Original Owner: Hamilton Field is on land originally owned by private individuals and companies. In 1930, the California Packing Company sold 630 acres of land to Marin County to use to entice the Army to build on the site. An additional 161 acres were purchased from Dr. T. Peter and Julia Bodkin. These parcels were combined with other County-owned land, and in 1932 Marin County sold a 927-acre parcel of land to the Department of the Army for $1.00 for use by the Army Air Corps as an air field. In 1947 Hamilton Air Field was transferred to the newly-formed U. S. Air Force and renamed Hamilton Air Force Base. In 1974 the U. S. Congress declared the installation excess to military needs and closed the base (Maniery et al. 1993). The warehouses were transferred to General Services Administration in 1974 and are currently being sold to private developers as excess property.

4. Builder, Contractor, Supplier: The quartermaster's warehouse contract was let to Oliver S. Almlie of San Francisco. He bid $40,518.00 and final construction cost was $41,977.84. The ordnance warehouse contract was let to K. E. Parker Co. of San Francisco for $34,900 and cost a total of $35,498.75 (Hamilton Facility Cards 1933-1971).

5. Original Plans and Construction: Original plans for administration and industrial buildings were drawn on linen with black ink by Nurse's corps of architects. The originals appear to have been destroyed, but copies of some of these plans (elevations, electrical, plumbing) are filed in the National Archives, Pacific Division, San Bruno, California. Facility cards for these buildings, including an original photograph taken at completion of construction, and floor plans are on file at the Hamilton Room, Novato History Museum, Novato, California.

6. Alterations/Additions: An overhead supply room was added to Facility No. 346 in 1963 and a sprinkler system, life support unit facility, and access ramps in 1974. Facility No. 400 was altered in 1943 by addition of a concrete-walled cold storage room and meat track. New loading bay doors and fluorescent lights were installed in 1958. In 1965 the building was remodeled to become the commercial transport facility. Changes included new pedestrian and overhead doors, new fixtures, and transformation of the commissary into a woodworking shop.

B. Historical Context:

See narrative for Hamilton Field (HABS No. CA-2398) and Section B in report HABS No. CA-2398-F.

PART II: ARCHITECTURAL INFORMATION

A. General Statement:

1. Architectural Character: Nurse and his team of architects designed reinforced concrete buildings covered with white stucco and red tile roofs and other feetures such as arcades and ornamental door surrounds in a basic Spanish Colonial Revival style. This style was used by Captain Nurse at Randolph Field in Texas and by other Army architects at various bases (Fine and Remington 1972:48; Thomason and Associates 1993). Captain Nurse blended the standard Colonial Revivel design with elements borrowed from Moorish, Spanish Churriguerresque, Mission, and Art Moderne styles, creating a unique Spanish Eclectic look.

The primary method of construction for the administration and industrial buildings was reinforced concrete covered with stucco exteriors and Mission tile roofs. Foundations of all buildings were constructed of concrete reinforced with steel bars in consideration of the seismic activity of the region. Buildings in the administration and industrial areas were built using concrete and wood piers for support in a response to their construction on reclaimed salt marsh.

2. Condition of fabric: The warehouses have been minimally maintained since closure in 1974, but are in good condition with the exception of missing asphelt roof shingles.

B. Description of Exterior:

1. Overall dimensions: These two warehouses measure 163 feet 11 inches by 68 feet 10 inches (Facility No. 400) and 143 feet 9 inches by 68 feet 7 inches (Facility No. 346) and are rectangular in shape. They are one and one-half stories high.

2. Foundation: The foundations are constructed of wood end concrete piles and concrete beams under a one-foot ten-inch concrete base.

3. Walls: The 10-inch-thick exterior walls consist of poured-in-place concrete coated with cementitious stucco rendered with a smooth face with gunnite trim. The exterior detailing consists of false-front gunnite-covered parapets on the front and rear, one and one-half stories high, with large square pillars attached to each corner and matching pilasters (on Fecility No. 400) on each side of the front entryways. The corner pillars and pilasters have recessed vertical panels. Windows have projecting cast concrete sills. Building 400 has a concrete arch over the front entry way.

4. Structural systems, framing: The buildings are supported by 12-inch metal "I" beam columns. The roofs are riveted steel truss structures, with six joists supporting each truss.

5. Porches, stoops, balconies, bulkheads: The primary entrances are accessed via a concrete stoop with wrought iron balustrades. Facility No. 346 has a pedestrian door located on the side of the rear facade accessed by a concrete stoop. The primary access to Facility No. 400 is through central double doors with a concrete porch, with stairs on either side and wrought iron balustrades. Loading bays along the north sides of the warehouses are accessed by concrete ramps and platforms supported by seven reinforced concrete columns. Metal canopies supported with decorative metal brackets are located over each loading bay. Eaves extend six end one-half feet over concrete platforms. These overhangs are supported by decorative wrought iron brackets anchored into the concrete walls.

6. Openings:

a. Doorways/doors: The primary double entrance doors of Building 400 have metal thresholds and are centrally located in the front facades and consist of glass over recessed panels with multi-light wire glass transoms. The rear doorways are centrally located, with a narrow side door in addition to a central entry. The loading bays, three on the north sides and two on the south, consist of overheed industrial metal doors with 3/2 glass lights over recessed panels. They open with a cable and pulley system and were installed in 1958. Each of the loeding doors has a small, hinged doorway in the center for pedestrian use. Doors in the offices are solid-core wood with three recessed panels and four lights, while those to the

storage areas have three wood panels. The large loading doors on the south side of Facility No. 346 have been enclosed with wood and sheetrock; double hollow core doors have been installed in the enclosures for access. Pedestrian doors in Facility No. 400 are hollow-core birch and were added in 1965.

b. Windows/shutters: Multi-light industrial steel sesh windows are located along both sides of the buildings between and flanking the bays; some have been covered with plywood. There are three sets of 12-light windows grouped together. The upper eight lights are awning windows. There are four windows on the north sides of the buildings and five on the south. Pairs of steel industrial sash windows flank the central front and rear entry doors; the windows in the front facades have metal canopies. Some windows have been covered with metal security bars spaced eight inches apart.

7. Roof:

a. Shape/covering: The roofs are gable, low-pitched, and covered with composition shingles and have copper coping.

b. Cornice/eaves: The buildings have a copper cornice.

C. Description of Interior:

1. Floor Plans:

a. Basement: There are no basements in the warehouses but there are three and one-half-foot high crawl spaces between the finished grade and the finished floor line. A two and one-half-foot square door provides access through the concrete walls to the crawl space.

b. First Floor: The primary human access to the buildings is through central entrance doors which enter directly into a central corridor. Large doors, located along both sides of the buildings, raise to provide access to loading bays. As originally designed, the central public corridor in Facility No. 400 was flenked by offices, commissary storage, a sales commissary, cold storage, small storage rooms, and a toilet. Metal racks provided storage for other items in the central portion of the building, with a large open area in the rear. Facility No. 346 was built as an ordnance warehouse and was divided into five large rooms, each with eight-inch thick reinforced concrete interior walls. These rooms were used for signal stores, communication and armament, small arms storage, ordnance storage, and an office with attached latrine. The primary entrance led into the office. Loading platforms extended along the sides of the building. Interior modifications to Facility No. 346 consist of two interior frame rooms which have been

constructed on the east side. Mesh cyclone fencing, supported by two-inch by four-inch wood instruction, runs the length of the rear portion of the building.

c. Second Floor: Facility No. 346 has a small room over the ordnance office that was a "camera obscura" point and included a cement platform. It is accessed by an iron ladder.

2. Stairways: Double concrete stairways, with metal railings, provide access to the front and rear entries. Two wooden stairways, on each side of the building, lead to the cyclone fenced second story on the west front of Facility No. 346; originally there was an iron ladder extending from the ordnance office upstairs.

3. Flooring: The subflooring for the buildings is concrete slab, smooth finished. The enclosed areas in Facility No. 346 have been covered with 8-inch square asphalt tile. The second story camera room in Facility No. 346 had a cement floor with a cement platform.

4. Wall/ceiling finish: The original walls were board-formed concrete or plaster. Walls in the enclosed areas in Facility No. 346 have been covered with acoustical tile and composition wood paneling and are eight-inch thick concrete. Walls and ceilings in the second story and office of this building are plaster and metal lathe. Other walls were covered with gypsum board when Facility No. 400 was rehabilitated in 1958. The original ceilings were open to the trusses, while those in the enclosed rooms are acoustical tile.

5. Openings:

a. Doorways/doors: The only interior doors are located in the one-story enclosed rooms and are standard wood doors with three recessed panels and four lights.

b. Windows: Twenty-three 3/3 metal sash windows are located along the long sides of Facility No. 400. Eight 3/3 metal sash windows are located along each short side. Polished wire glass transoms are located over the loading platform doors. Natural lighting to the second story camera room in Facility No. 346 is provided by two square metal louvers.

6. Decorative features/trim: No significant decorative trim was noted.

7. Hardware: The door hardware consists of a standard circular knob and lock set with half mortise door hinge. The warehouse doors are operated by a cable and pulley system.

8. Mechanical equipment:

a. Heating, air conditioning, ventilation: The building had gas steam radiators that were replaced by ceiling-mounted 60,000 BTU gas heaters in 1967. The office in Facility No. 400 has a free-standing gas heater. Two stationary 24-inch metal ventilators are located on the roof and there are metal louvers on the gable ends. Facility No. 400 had a 15-cubic-foot dust collection system with ducts installed in 1965. Facility No. 346 has a ceiling-mounted Reznor gas heather with metal ducts. There is also a "Day and Night Heater Unit" made by the Day and Night Manufacturing Company of La Puente, California. A 40-gallon Hoyt netural gas water heater is located in the latrine.

b. Lighting: Original lighting consisted of ceiling-mounted "schoolhouse" type fixtures with a large milkglass bowl supported by a chain, as well as drop-light hanging fixtures with shades. Some of these are in place. Facility No. 400 had a drum-type incandescent fixture with pendant aluminum mercury vepor lamps. It now has 96-inch two-tube fluorescent "Brite Slimline" lights with porcelain enamel reflectors mounted on the ceiling. Facility No. 346 has three General Electric transformers (model no. 9T21Y1756). Other equipment includes Electrical 220 volt panel, made by Square D Company - QO Load Center and a Westinghouse Electric panel board (Model D 743120). Exposed conduits lead to ceiling-mounted porcelain enameled fixtures with exposed bulbs and two tube fluorescent lights, some with diffused plastic panels.

c. Plumbing: The lavatory contains original wall-mounted flush valve "Crane" urinal, a "Standard" flush valve toilet, and wall-mounted sink. The soap dispenser is enameled with a mica glass window riveted to its fece and says "BORAXO."

d. Miscellaneous: As a post exchange, Facility No. 400 had a refrigeretion unit for cold storage, and a ceiling-mounted meat rail leading from the loading platforms to the meat room in cold storage.

9. Original Furnishings: The camera room in Facility No. 346 had a wood counter; it has been removed.

D. Site:

1. General site orientation: The primary facades of both warehouses face southwest. The buildings are located in the original Spanish Colonial Revival district of Hamilton Army Air Field on a flat site that is surrounded by rolling hills, fitting within a grid system adjacent to the flight field.

2. Historic landscape design: Captain Nurse's overall plan for base design included thoughtful use of rock walls, terracing, and plantings to create a visual effect that was continued, in a more limited fashion, during World War II. Rock terracing throughout the original base served to simultaneously separate individual residences while visually uniting various sections of the base into an overall city-like plan. They were built as part of the final phase of original post construction in 1935 (Hamilton Official Photographs 1934-1935). Foundation and accent plantings, tree-lined streets, and retention of natural oak groves and rolling hills complement the rock work.

The majority of buildings in the administration area have some landscaping, particularly around the NCO barracks. Street trees, such as Modesto ash, camphor, and various palms, are present throughout this area. Building corner and doorways are delimited by a number of conifers, the most prominent being sawara false cypress and Italian cypress. Accent trees include coast redwood and some red ironbark, which were incorporated into divider triangles and sometimes near entrances. California and Mexican fan palms and golden bamboo were prominent framers of entrances, as was the New Zealand draceaena. Foundation plantings are quite diverse and include mock orange, flowering quince, Portugal laurel, and Manukka tea tree. Japanese privet, Hollywood juniper, and heavenly bamboo appear to have been added subsequent to the late 1930s and were not part of the original landscape design on base.

Both buildings are surrounded by other warehouses and industrial buildings and asphalt parking lots. Palm trees flank the front entrances.

PART III. SOURCES OF INFORMATION

A. Architectural Drawings:

See narrative for Hamilton Field (HABS No. CA-2398). Copies of Nurse's plans of these buildings are filed at the National Archives, Pacific Division, San Bruno, CA. and the Hamilton Room, Novato History Museum, Novato.

B. Historic Maps and Views:

See narrative for Hamilton Field (HABS No. CA-2398).

C. Interviews:

See narrative for Hamilton Field (HABS No. CA-2398).

D. Bibliography:

See narrative for Hamilton Field (HABS No. CA-2398).

Sources cited in this individual report are listed below.

Fine, Jesse, and Lenore Remington
1972 *Army Corps of Engineers: Construction in the U.S.* U.S. Army and World War II, Office of Military History.

Hamilton Facility Cards
1933-1971 Maintenance Cards for Base Facilities. On file, Hamilton Army Air Field Installation Office, Novato, and Hamilton Room, Novato History Museum, Novato.

Maniery, Mary L., Leslie R. Fryman, and Fred Hrusa
1993 *National Register of Historic Places Evaluation, Hamilton Army Air Field Historic District, Marin County, California.* Submitted to U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Sacramento District.

Thomason and Associates
1993 *Randolph Air Force Base, San Antonio, Texas.* Cultural Resource Survey, Final Report. Nashville, Tennessee. On file, State Office of Historic Preservation, Austin, Texas.

E. Likely Sources Not Yet Investigated:

See narrative for Hamilton Field (HABS No. CA-2398).

F. Supplemental Material:

Copies of representative floor plans of Facility Nos. 346, 400, dated in the 1930s and prepared by the Quartermaster's General Office are attached to this form. The line drawn sketches were drafted on site in 1994 by Keith Syda, scanned into a computer and drawn by Christopher MacDonald in 1995, and corrected and finalized by Claire Warshaw in 1996 (all PAR Environmental Services, Inc. staff).

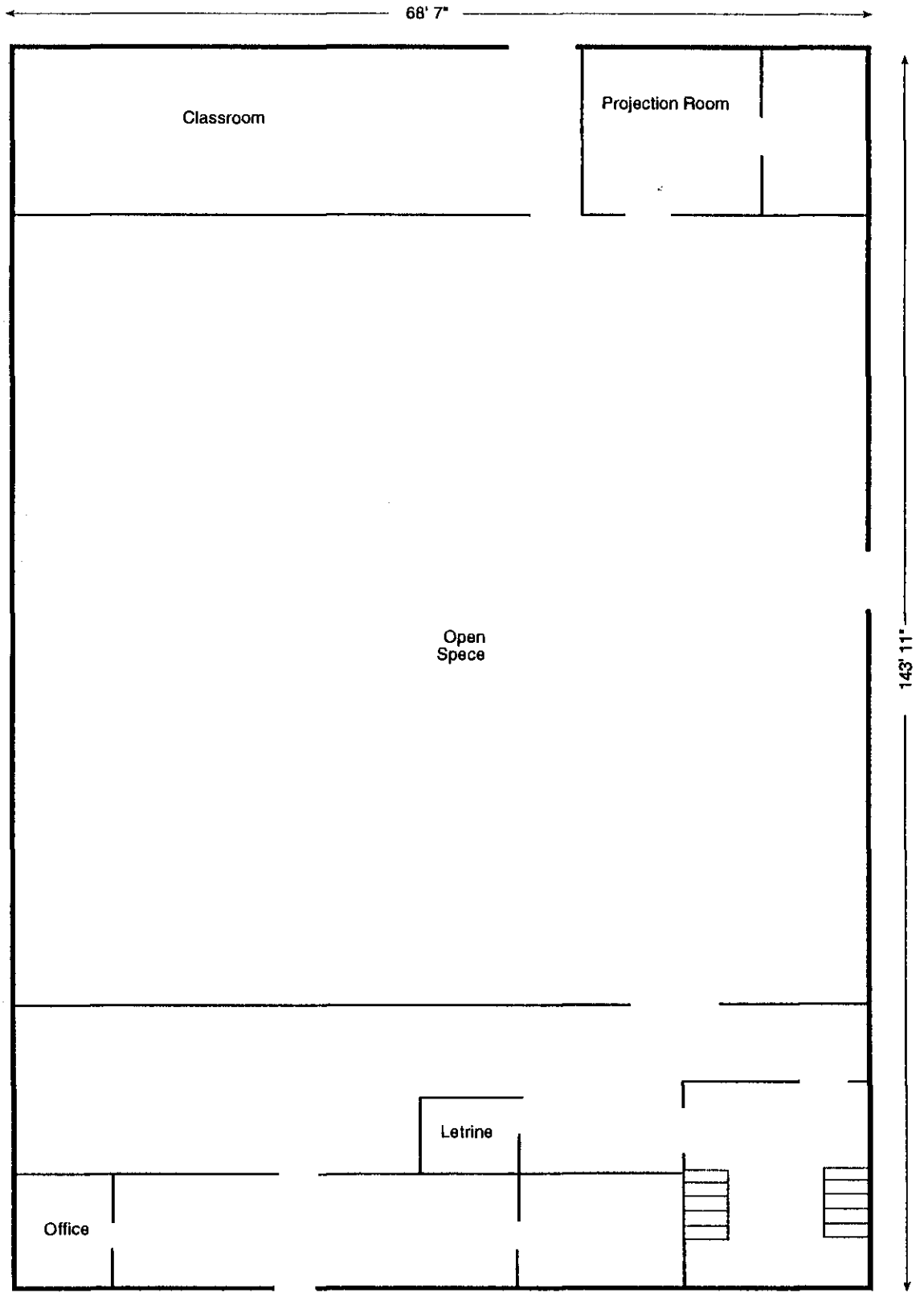
PART IV. PROJECT INFORMATION

Hamilton Army Air Field is owned by various federal entities including the Department of the Navy, Department of the Army, United States Coast Guard, and General Services

Administration. The Army/GSA parcels are being excessed and sold to private developers. The Navy property is included in Base Closure and Realignment actions.

As part of the Army's undertaking, it has been determined in consultation with the California Office of Historic Preservation (OHP) that the excess sale will have an affect on properties at the air field, and that these properties are components of a district that is eligible for inclusion in the National Register of Historic Places. Based on consultation with the OHP and the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation, pursuant to 36 CFR part 800, regulations implementing Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act (16 U.S.C. 470f), a Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) was entered into by the interested parties in March 1994. The agreement stipulated that prior to excess sale the Army must contact the HABS/HAER division at the Western Regional Office of the National Park Service, San Francisco, California, to determine the appropriate level and kind of recordation for the subject properties. The MOA further stipulated that copies of the documentation be made available to the OHP and appropriate local archives designated by the OHP. This recordation has been prepared in order to meet those stipulations.

The title page, Part I, and Part III were prepared by Mary L. Maniery, Historian, PAR Environmental Services, Sacramento. Architectural descriptions in Part II were compiled by Judith Marvin, Historian/Architectural Historian, Foothill Resources, Murphys, California. Descriptions were checked against photographs and plans by Mary L. Maniery and were embellished and corrected, as necessary. Information on historic landscape design was extracted by Mary L. Maniery from a report prepared by Dr. Fred Hrusa, Botanist, PAR Environmental Services. Photography was prepared by David DeVries, Mesa Technical, Berkeley, California.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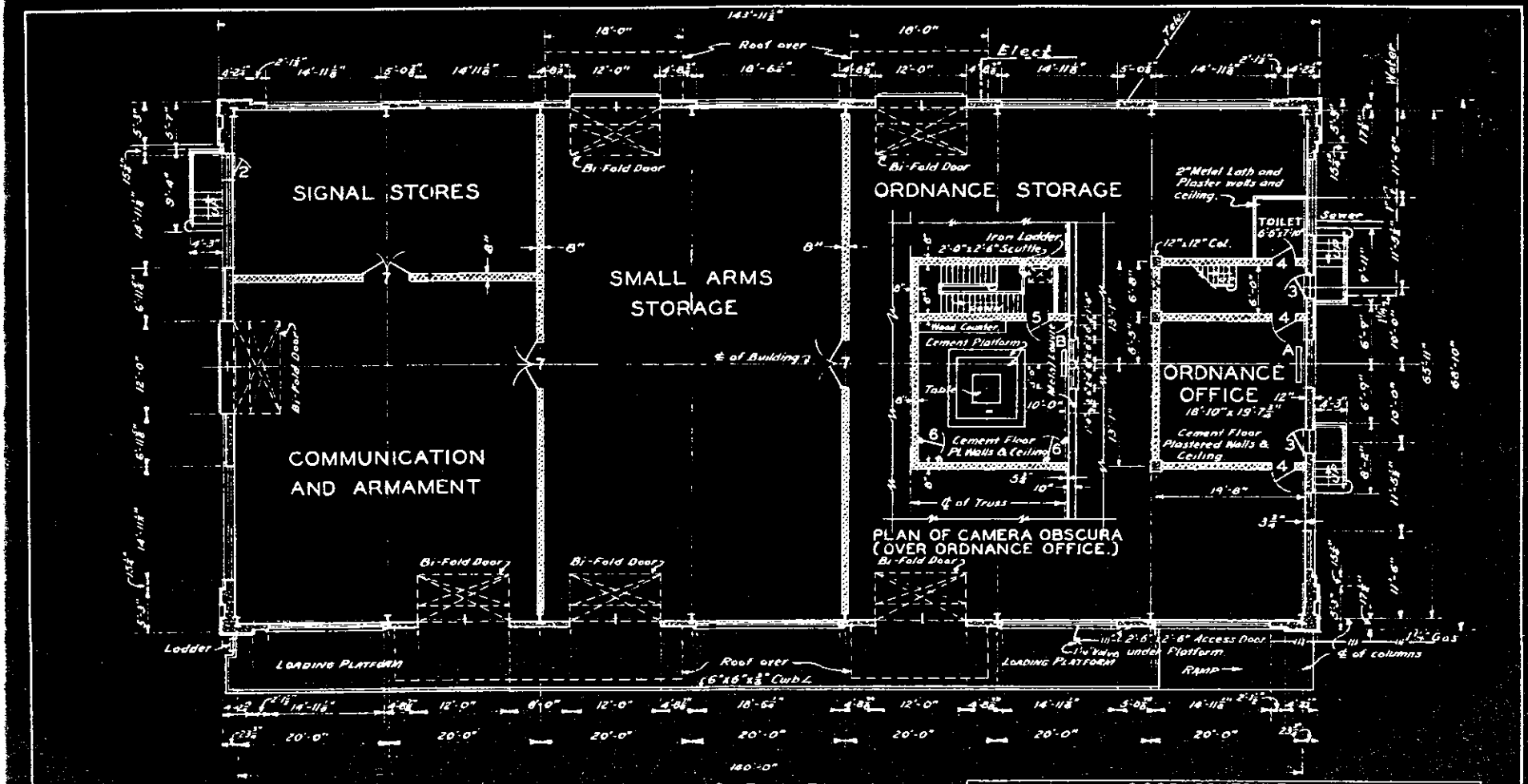
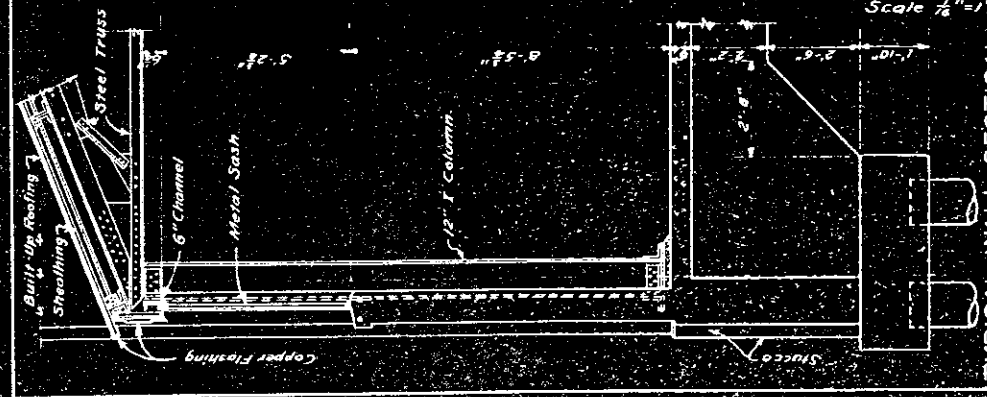
Office



FLOOR PLAN
Scale 1/16"=1'



TYPICAL WALL SECTION
Scale 1"=1'

DOOR SCHEDULE			
MK.	WIDTH	LENGTH	DESCRIPTION
1	12'-0"	11'-0"	STEEL BI-FOLDING-GLAZED TOP
2	3'-0"	7'-0"	KALAMEIN-GLAZED TOP
3	3'-0"	7'-0"	KALAMEIN-GL. TOP-FIXED TRAN.
4	3'-0"	7'-0"	KALAMEIN-2 PANEL
5	3'-0"	6'-0"	" " "
6	2'-8"	5'-8"	WOOD-5 PANEL
7	3'-0"	7'-0"	KALAMEIN 2 PANEL-DBL. DOORS

-GAS STEAM RADIATORS-
A-20 SECT., 38", 4 COL., 110 SQ.FT.
B-13 SECT., 38", 4 COL., 72 SQ.FT.

WAR DEPARTMENT
OFFICE CONSTRUCTING QUARTERMASTER
HAMILTON FIELD, CALIF.

ORDNANCE WAREHOUSE

Drawn - G.L.R.
Traced G.L.R.
Checked BEE
Date 8-31-34

H.B. NURSE
Capt. Q.M.C.
Constructing Quartermaster.

O.Q.M.G. Plan 6754-310 to 6754-314 inc.
Post Plan No. 973-27-344
Bldg. No. 25